

financial resources need to go towards helping fire departments protect people. According to the Forest Service, more than 90 percent of wild land fires are the result of human activity, and fires are almost twice as likely to start near roads than in the wilderness.

Even though they are adjacent to some of America's largest communities, Southern California forests only receive a fraction of the money they need to manage fire every year. Last year, Southern California forests received only \$4 million out of the \$53 million spent on California fire reduction—a mere 8 percent of the fire funding distributed to California's National Forests.

The Southern California fires demonstrate that the federal government must spend its fire management dollars near communities. Firefighters should not be put in harms way when we can prevent future tragedies by making communities near forest areas.

Our Nation is blessed with brave men and women who protect our homeland from every potential danger and the risk of their own safety to demonstrate their commitment to the state of California. They are true American heroes and I thank them on behalf of my constituents.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make a clarification to my voting record. I returned early this morning from a Congressional Delegation trip to Iraq. Unfortunately, while I was away, I was unable to cast a recorded vote on three measures passed yesterday. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of:

S.J. Res. 22—A resolution recognizing the Agriculture Research Service of the Dept of Agriculture.

S.J. Res. 18—A resolution commending the Inspectors General.

H. Con. Res. 299—Honoring Mr. Sargent Shriver.

SENSE OF THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION TO COMBAT OBSTETRIC FISTULA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce a Sense of the Congress resolution which will draw attention to a tragedy which affects thousands of women around the world each year.

Obstetric fistula is a major pregnancy-related complication. It occurs when a woman is in obstructed and prolonged labor without medical help. The prolonged pressure of the baby's head against the mother's pelvis cuts off the blood supply to the soft tissues surrounding her bladder, rectum, and vagina. Because of the prolonged and difficult labor, the baby usually dies. However, if the mother survives, the physical and emotional con-

sequences are devastating. The injured tissue soon rots away, leaving a perforation, or fistula which causes the woman to lose control over urination and/or bowel function. Because of a lack of understanding about the cause and treatment of fistulas, women who are fistula sufferers are often abandoned by their husbands, forced out of their homes, and ostracized by family.

Although currently virtually unknown in the western world, fistulas were once common in the United States and Europe before the advent of widespread maternal healthcare and hospital births. The current estimates of one million fistula sufferers may be very conservative. Actual sufferers may number over 3 million throughout the developing world. This suffering can be readily ameliorated with reconstructive surgery. Fistula surgical repair has up to a 90 percent success rate and ranges in cost from \$100–\$400. Although this surgery is inexpensive by American standards, for women in the developing world, this cost is prohibitive. Even if the surgery is affordable, many women in developing countries are either unaware of treatment options or unable to access treatment.

A recent report, *Obstetric Fistula Needs Assessment: Findings from Nine African Countries*, commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) details fistula occurrence in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Benin, Chad, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia. There are currently 35 hospitals in the aforementioned countries which have the capacity to conduct fistula surgery, but are without the financial resources.

The United States House of Representatives should address this issue. To that end, I am introducing a Sense of the Congress Resolution which acknowledges the need of the U.S. government to take steps to end the needless suffering of these women.

I request that my colleagues support this bill.

TRIBUTE TO THE HUNTINGDON LADY BEARCATS

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Huntingdon Lady Bearcats on their PIAA, Class AA volleyball State championship.

The Bearcats overcame the odds against them and handily defeated their competition in the tournament. United behind their strong coach, Priscilla Gibboney, the high school girls got everyone involved in each match, allowing the underestimated team to hand out losses to taller, more experienced opponents.

The Huntingdon Lady Bearcats have claimed two team State championship titles in the school's history, which is a great testimony to the unique character of this team. They fought through obstacles and kept their composure, and their unwillingness to quit led to their perseverance. I congratulate the Huntingdon Lady Bearcats on their State championship and I look forward to hearing of their continued success in next year's season.

Led by head coach Priscilla Gibboney and assistant coach David Kemp, the 13 members

of this championship team include Seniors Tara McMinn (Captain), Megan Goss, Laura Madden, Meredith Orr, Katie Criswell, Jordan Rackley, and Sara Kylor; Juniors Hadley Hammers, Bethany Kozak, and Jenna Sheffield; Sophomores Olivia Hallahan and Emily Kemp; and Freshman Greta Gibboney. Congratulations one and all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was tending to official business and was not present for Roll Call Votes 620 through 623. The votes were on Senate Joint Resolutions 22 and 18, House Concurrent Resolution 299, and on a motion to the meeting time of the House, respectively. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on these measures.

TRIBUTE TO MOTHER ESSIE BAXTER JONES

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mother Essie Baxter Jones, for her 100th birthday celebration.

Mother Essie Baxter Jones was born the third of nine children on March 23, 1903 in Kilgore, Texas, Gregg County, Route 1. In 1903, Route 1 was simply a horse and buggy trail; today, it is a superhighway, Highway 1252. Growing up, she worked on a farm where she learned about growing cotton, corn, peanuts, white potatoes, sweet potatoes and watermelons, and also helped her father build churches throughout the community.

Later on, she operated a successful family store and café for those who came to work in the oil fields in Kilgore and afterward built her own café in Odessa, Texas. She also worked in the defense industry sewing tents and cooking for the soldiers in Waco, Texas.

Having moved here in 1963, Mother Essie Baxter Jones has been a resident of San Jose, California for 40 years and, throughout that time, she has been actively involved in the community, including her work in the Prayer Garden Church of God in Christ and Templo Juan 3:16 in San Jose, California.

Her "secrets" for lifelong happiness are: "Honor, obey and respect your mother and father; trust in the Lord and obey His Word; deal fairly with everyone; and save some of the money that you earn."

I want to thank Mother Essie Baxter Jones for her many years of service to our community and congratulate her on this milestone birthday, her 100th. Much has changed for the better during her lifetime and she contributed to the positive changes. May God bless her with years of happiness and service.